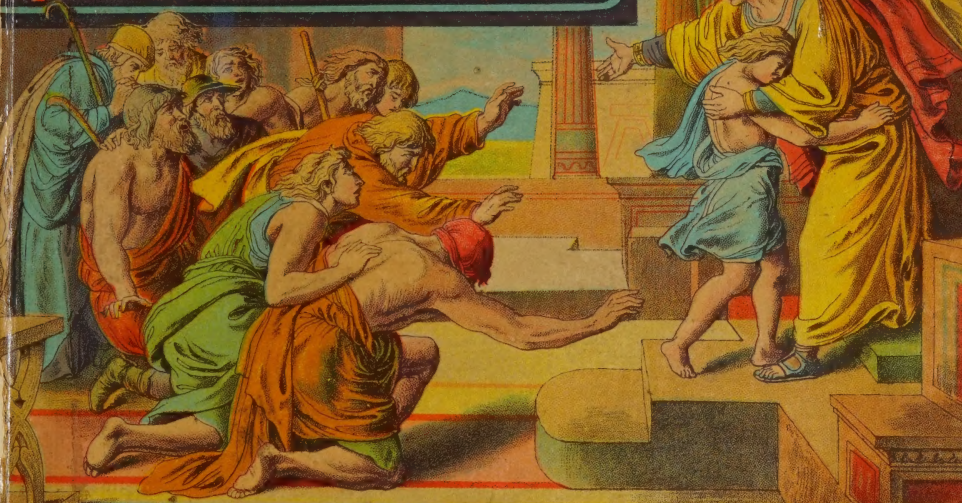


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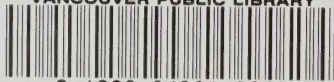
JOSEPH MAKING HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN

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JESUS BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

*"Let the little children come unto me, and forbid them not."
And he took them up in his arms, put his hands
upon them, and blessed them.*

FAVOURITE BIBLE STORIES




DAVID AND GOLIATH.

Page 79.

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS

London, Edinburgh, and New York.



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FAVOURITE BIBLE STORIES

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.



THOMAS NELSON AND SONS
London, Edinburgh, and New York

1893

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FAVOURITE BIBLE STORIES.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

JOSEPH was the son of Jacob, who was called Israel by God. Jacob had twelve sons—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Joseph, and Benjamin. And they lived in the land of Canaan.

Joseph's mother, Rachel, was dead ; and Jacob loved Joseph more than all his other children, because he was the son of his old age : and he made him a coat of many colours.

Now Joseph was only a boy at the time our story begins. But all his brothers, except Benjamin, were grown men ; and seeing how much their father loved Joseph, they were envious of him and hated him.

One night Joseph dreamed that he and his brothers

were in a field of corn binding sheaves, and that his brothers' sheaves came and bowed down before his sheaf, which stood upright. He also dreamed that the sun and the moon and eleven stars all bowed down before him.

It was only a dream. But in those days God often spoke to men in dreams, so that even Jacob thought something was meant by it ; and as for his brothers, they were very angry, and asked Joseph if he really thought that he was going to rule over them.

Now Jacob was very rich in cattle and flocks and herds, and his sons used to take care of all the sheep. One day he called Joseph, and told him to go to the fields where the sheep were feeding, and see if all was well with his brothers and the flocks, and come back and tell him. So Joseph went, and found them in a place called Dothan.

Now, while he was yet a long way off, his brothers saw him, and said one to another, " See, this dreamer cometh. Let us kill him, and throw him into a pit ; and we will say that a wild beast has eaten him. Then we shall see what will become of his dreams." But Reuben, the eldest, said, " Do not let us shed his blood ; let us put him into this pit here in the wilderness." For Reuben thought he would come



JOSEPH CAST INTO THE PIT.

by-and-by and take Joseph out and send him safe home.

So when poor Joseph came up to his brethren,

they seized him, and took off his coat of many colours, and put him down into the pit.

Just after they had done so, a party of merchants came by with their camels on their way to Egypt. And Judah said, "Let us sell him to the merchants." And so they did, Reuben not being there. They drew poor Joseph up out of the pit, and sold him for twenty pieces of silver; and the merchants carried him away with them into Egypt.

When Reuben came back, and found that Joseph was gone, he was very sad; but his brothers took the many-coloured coat, and having dipped it in the blood of a kid, they brought it to their father Jacob, and asked him if he knew whose coat it was. And Jacob knew the coat at once, and said, "It is my son's coat; a wild beast must have eaten him." And Jacob mourned a long time for his dear son Joseph; nothing could comfort him.

Meanwhile the merchants carried Joseph down into Egypt, where they sold him to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the king. So Joseph was now a slave, far from home and his dear father. But God watched over him, and from the time he went into Potiphar's house everything went well there with Potiphar. He saw that God was with Joseph; and he loved him, and trusted all he had in Joseph's



THE DECEIT OF JOSEPH'S BRETHREN.

hands. And the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake.

But after he had been there some time, Potiphar's

wife, who was a very bad woman, told wicked stories of him to her husband ; and Potiphar, believing his wife, put Joseph into the king's prison, and there he lay in bondage. But God, who knew Joseph was innocent, was still with him, and made the keeper of the prison very kind to him, so that all the prisoners were trusted to Joseph's care.

Now it so happened that, for some reason or other, Pharaoh was angry with his chief butler and chief baker, and sent them both to the same prison where Joseph was. And one morning when Joseph went in to see them he found them both very sad. And he asked them what was the matter. So they told him they had had strange dreams.

The butler had dreamed that he saw a vine with three branches, from which he took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and gave the cup into the king's hand. Then Joseph told the butler that the dream meant that in three days Pharaoh would take him out of prison and make him butler again. And Joseph asked the butler to think of him when he should be set free, and ask the king to let him out of prison, for he had really done nothing for which he ought to be shut up.

Then the baker told his dream—that he had three white baskets, with baked meats for Pharaoh,



JOSEPH INTERPRETING THE DREAMS OF THE CHIEF BUTLER AND BAKER.

on his head, and that the birds came and fed on the meats. But Joseph told the baker his dream meant that in three days Pharaoh would hang him

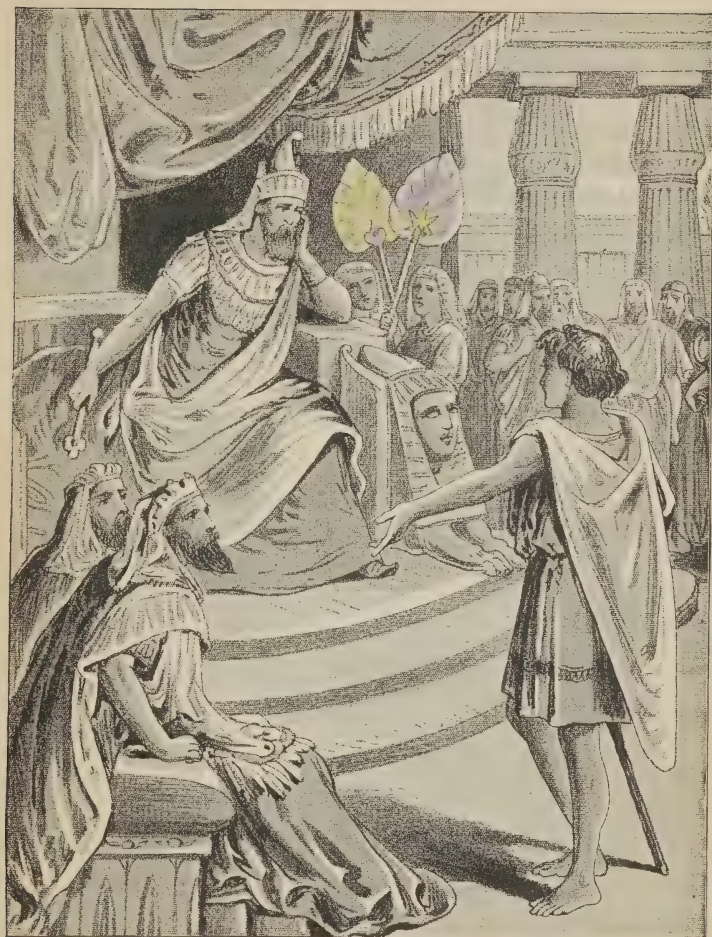
on a tree, and the birds of the air should eat his flesh.

And it all came to pass just as Joseph said ; for God had showed him the meaning of these dreams : Pharaoh sent for his butler out of prison, and put him into his former post again ; but the baker was hanged upon a tree. Yet the butler did not think of poor Joseph, but forgot all about him.

Two years passed away, and Joseph was still in prison, when one night Pharaoh had two strange dreams, and he was troubled to know what they could mean ; but none of his wise men could tell him. Then all at once the butler thought of Joseph, and said to Pharaoh, " I remember my faults this day." And he told how Joseph had truly made out the meaning of his dream and the baker's, so long ago.

Then they sent in haste to the prison for Joseph, and he was washed and dressed and brought in before the king, who said he had heard Joseph could interpret, or make out, the meaning of dreams. But Joseph did not take praise to himself. He said, " It is not in me : God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

So Pharaoh told his dreams :—How that he had stood on the bank of the river, and seen seven fat



JOSEPH INTERPRETING PHARAOH'S DREAM.

kine, or cows, come up out of it, and they fed in the meadow. But then seven very thin cows came after them, and ate up the fat cows. Afterwards he

dreamed that he saw seven full good ears of corn, and seven very poor withered ears that ate up the good ones.

So Joseph told Pharaoh that the two dreams meant the same thing, and were sent by God to foretell, or show, what was going to happen in Egypt :— That the seven fat kine, and the seven good ears of corn, meant seven years of great plenty. And the seven poor kine, and the seven withered ears of corn, meant seven years of famine, or great want, that were to come after those years, and consume, or eat up, all the plenty they had brought.

And Joseph advised Pharaoh to set some wise man over the land of Egypt, who would see that the people stored up plenty of corn and other food during the seven good years, so that when the time of want came they might not be all starved.

And Pharaoh was pleased with Joseph, seeing that he had the Spirit of God ; and Pharaoh said, “ There is no man so wise and discreet as thou art. See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.” And Pharaoh put his own ring on Joseph’s hand, and dressed him in fine linen, with a gold chain round his neck, and made him ride in one of his own chariots. And the people cried before him, “ Bow the knee.” So Joseph, though but thirty years old, was



JOSEPH'S ADVANCEMENT.

made ruler over all the land of Egypt, and only Pharaoh was greater than he.

And everything came to pass just as Joseph had

foretold. For seven years the earth brought forth a great abundance of corn and food of all kinds. And Joseph had it gathered and stored up in the cities against the time of want. The corn was like the sand of the sea—no one could count it all. But when seven years had passed away, the years of famine began; and in all countries there was great want. But in Egypt they had food; for Pharaoh sent all the people who were hungry to Joseph, and he opened the storehouses and sold them corn. And people came from all the lands round about to buy food from Joseph.

Now Jacob, Joseph's old father, and his eleven sons, began to be in want in Canaan; and hearing that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob told his sons to go there and buy some. But he would not let Benjamin go, for fear any harm might befall him. So the ten elder brethren came, with many others, and bowed down before the governor, with their faces to the earth, not knowing he was their own brother.

But Joseph knew his brethren when he saw them, for they were not so changed as he was; and he remembered his dreams. Yet he did not tell them who he was, but pretended to be rough with them, and to think that they were spies.

Then they told him they were twelve brothers;



JOSEPH'S BRETHREN BOWING BEFORE HIM.

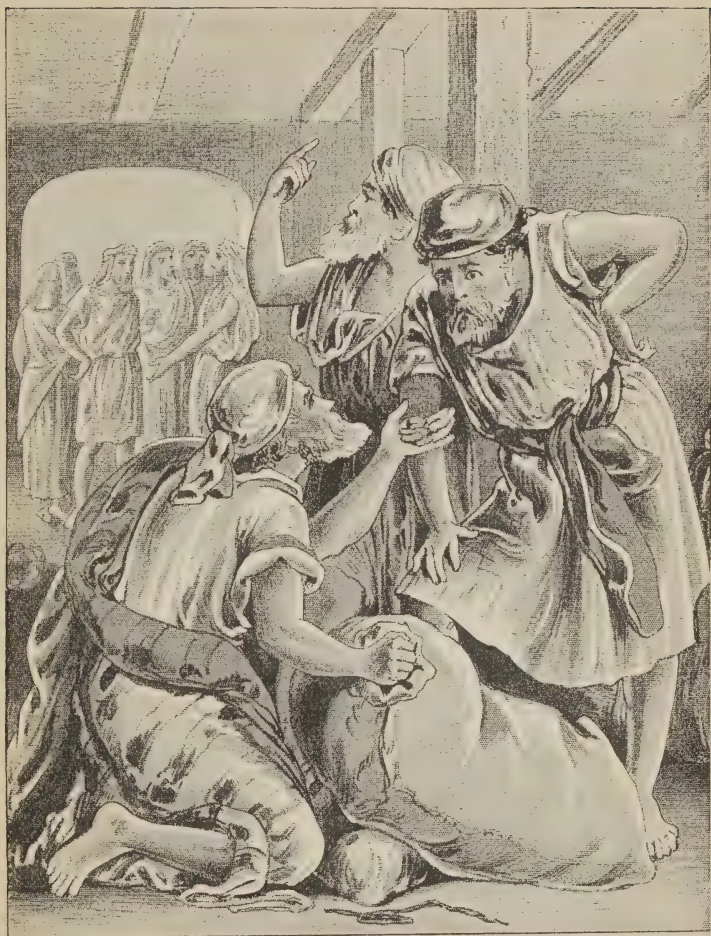
that one of them was at home with their old father, "and one," said they, thinking of the young brother to whom they had been so cruel, "*one is not.*"

But Joseph seemed not to believe what they said, and put them in prison for three days, saying he would not let them go home till he saw their youngest brother, that he might know whether they spoke truth or not. But at the end of three days he said, "This do, and live; for I fear God. Let one of you stay here in prison, whilst the others go and carry food to your home. And if you bring back your young brother, then I shall know ye are true men and not spies."

Then the brothers, full of trouble, and not knowing Joseph understood them—for he spoke Egyptian before them—said to each other, "What shall we do? This trouble is come upon us because we were so cruel to our young brother Joseph, and would not listen when he begged us to have pity on him." And Reuben said, "Did I not tell you not to sin against the child, and ye would not hear?"

When Joseph heard all this he turned away from his brethren and wept. And at last Simeon was bound and put in prison, to stay there till the others came back; and they set off with plenty of corn and food to eat by the way. And each man's money, that he had paid for the corn, was, by Joseph's orders, put back in the top of his sack.

Now on their way home they stopped at an inn to



THE MONEY FOUND IN THE MOUTH OF THE SACK.

rest, and opening their sacks to give the asses food, they found the money. Then they felt afraid. And going home to their old father, they told him all

about it, and he could not make out why this had been done. But he said at once he would not let Benjamin go. "Joseph," said he, "is not, and Simeon is not, and you want to take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." Poor old Jacob! he did not know that God was making all these things work for his good.

But very soon all the corn they had bought in Egypt was eaten up, and then Jacob said to his sons, "Go again, buy us a little food." And Judah said, "We will go if you will let Benjamin go with us. Else there is no use in our going; for the man told us, Ye shall not see my face again, unless your youngest brother is with you."

So after some time Jacob was persuaded to let Benjamin go. And he made his sons take a little present for the governor, not knowing it was his own dear son Joseph. "Take," said he, "some fruits of the land to the man, some balm, and honey, and nuts, and almonds. And take double money in your hands: perhaps it was by mistake that your money was put back into your sacks. And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send back your other brother and Benjamin."

So they did as their father said, and went down again to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.



MEETING OF JOSEPH AND BENJAMIN.

When Joseph saw his dear young brother Benjamin was with them, he was very glad, and told his steward to get a feast ready, for these men should

dine with him at noon. So the steward brought them into Joseph's house, at which they felt frightened. But the steward comforted them, and brought Simeon to them out of his prison, and gave them water to wash their feet.

And when Joseph came home they gave him the present they had brought, and bowed down before him. And Joseph said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spoke?" And they said, "He is well." Then Joseph looked on Benjamin, and felt so much tender love in his heart for his young brother, that he was obliged to go away into his own room, and there he wept. But after washing his face, that they might not see he had wept, he came back again, and made all his brethren sit down at table, according to their ages, which they thought it strange he should know, and he sent them nice things from his own table. And to Benjamin he sent five times as much as to the others.

Then he had their sacks once more filled with corn, and their money put in also, and he ordered his steward to hide his own silver cup in Benjamin's sack. And in the early morning they all set off home again.

But before they had gone far Joseph sent his steward after them to ask why they had stolen his



MEETING OF JACOB AND JOSEPH.

silver cup. And his brothers were shocked to think they should be suspected, and they said if the cup were found upon any one of them, that one should

become Joseph's servant. So they opened their sacks, and, behold, the cup was in Benjamin's.

Then they were all hurried back before Joseph, where, full of grief, they declared themselves innocent, and said that if Benjamin were not allowed to go home with them, their father would be sure to die of sorrow. And Judah offered to become a slave to Joseph instead of Benjamin, if only he would send the boy back.

Then Joseph could not refrain himself any more. And he sent all but his brothers out of the room whilst he made himself known to them. "I am Joseph," he said. "Does my father yet live?" Then his brethren were full of shame before him as they thought of the past. But he made them come near, and kissed and wept over them, and forgave them all that they had done to him, and said, "It was not you, but God who sent me here, to save your lives; so be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither. Go to my father, and tell him that God hath made me lord over all Egypt. Tell him to come here with you, and ye shall all dwell in the land of Goshen, you and your children."

And Pharaoh rejoiced when he heard that Joseph's brethren were with him. But Joseph made haste to send them away home to bring his dear old father.

And he gave them clothes, and silver, and waggons to bring Jacob; and he said, "See that ye fall not out by the way."

And Jacob, when he heard the good news, said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." And he went down to Egypt, he and all his sons; and Joseph came to meet him, and fell on his neck and wept for joy.

And Pharaoh welcomed Jacob and his sons, and gave them all they could desire, and said they should dwell in the best part of the land. And Jacob was one hundred and thirty years old when he came before Pharaoh. And he blessed Pharaoh. And all the rest of his days he lived in Goshen, near his dear son Joseph.

THE STORY OF MOSES.



WHEN the Israelites first went to live in Egypt they were only a few people, who lived quietly and kept sheep and cattle.

But God loved the Israelites and blessed them. Their little children were strong and healthy, and they nearly all grew up to be men and women ; and then there were a great many Israelites in Egypt,—so many that the Egyptians were afraid of them ; for they thought that perhaps some day the Israelites might fight battles with them and overcome them, and have it all their own way in the land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh the king of Egypt said, “These Israelites must be kept down. We will make them do all our hard work.” So he set them to make bricks and to build cities ; and task-masters were set over them to keep them at work from morning to night.

But the Israelites were clever, useful people ; and



THE ARK OF BULRUSHES.

though they got no rest and never had a holiday, they still were strong and healthy, and their children grew and throve. So Pharaoh was more afraid of

them than ever ; for he thought there would soon be more Israelites in the country than Egyptians. And he gave an order that in future every little Israelite boy, as soon as he was born, should be thrown into the river and drowned, so that he might never grow up to be a soldier who could fight the Egyptians.

After this cruel order had been given, one day a beautiful little Israelite baby-boy was born ; and his father and mother hid him away where Pharaoh's servants might not find him.

But when he grew to be three months old they could no longer keep it secret that there was a baby in the house. Then his mother made a little basket of bulrushes, and painted it over with pitch, so that no water could get into it. And in the basket she laid her pretty baby, and she placed it among the reeds that grew on the brink of the river ; and her little daughter stayed near to watch what should become of the little child.

Then King Pharaoh's daughter with her maids came down to the river to bathe ; and she saw the basket, and sent one of her maids to fetch it. And when it was opened the baby cried, so that Pharaoh's daughter pitied him and loved him ; and she said, " This is one of the Israelites' children."

The little sister, who was watching, saw that the



THE FINDING OF MOSES.

king's daughter was full of pity for the baby, and she came near and said, "Shall I call one of the Israelite women to nurse that little child for you?"

Pharaoh's daughter said, "Do so."

So the girl went and brought her mother.

And Pharaoh's daughter said to the mother, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will pay you."

So the mother took her own little boy and nursed him. And when he was big enough she gave him again to the princess, who called him Moses, and brought him up as her own son.

So the boy Moses grew up in a palace, and he was taught everything that the Egyptians knew.

But he never forgot that he himself was an Israelite, and he always loved his own people best. He was grieved for the troubles and the hardships of the Israelites (for the Egyptians treated them worse and worse); and when he was grown up to be a man he took their part and tried to help them.

King Pharaoh was very angry with Moses, and tried to kill him, because he took part with the unhappy Israelites. But Moses ran away, and escaped into the land of Midian; and there he lived for forty years, keeping sheep for a man called Jethro.

But all that time Moses never forgot the Israelites and their bitter troubles, and how cruelly they were treated by the Egyptians. God also remembered



MOSES AT THE BURNING BUSH.

the Israelites, whom he loved and had promised to bless, and he saw all the cruelty of Pharaoh and his task-masters.

One day, as Moses was tending Jethro's sheep, he led his flock to a wild, lonely place among the hills. As he was feeding them there he lifted up his eyes, and saw a little way off from him a bush which seemed to be all on fire; but when he had watched it for a while he saw that the bush was not burned up, though the flame still continued bright and strong. So Moses went nearer, to see why it was that the bush was not burned up.

Then the voice of God spoke to him from the midst of the burning bush; and God said to him, "Put off your shoes from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

Then Moses put off his shoes from his feet, and he bent down with his face to the ground; for he knew that God was speaking to him.

And God said, "I have seen the troubles of my people the Israelites who are in Egypt, and I have heard their cry; and I am come to save them from the hands of the Egyptians, and to bring them out of the land of Egypt into a large and beautiful and fruitful land, which I will give them for their own. And I will send you to Pharaoh to tell him to let my people go; and you shall lead them into the land that I will give them.

Moses was afraid when he heard of this great work



MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH.

that God was giving him to do ; for he knew that it would be very hard not only to make Pharaoh listen to him, but also to get the Israelites to obey him

and follow him. And he said, "Who am I, that I should do this?"

But God comforted Moses, and told him how he would be with him always, to help him and to tell him what to do; and that though Pharaoh would certainly refuse at first to let the Israelites go, yet in the end he would have to do so.

Then Moses set out to return into Egypt. And God sent Aaron, the brother of Moses, to meet him, to go with him to Pharaoh, and to help him in all his work. So Moses and Aaron went together into Egypt.

And when they got there they went to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus saith the Lord God of the Israelites, Let my people go, that they may serve me."

But Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord, neither will I let the Israelites go." And he commanded the task-masters to give the Israelites more work than ever, so that they might have no time to think about getting away.

So the task-masters gave them more and more work to do; and when they could not do it they were cruelly beaten.

Then God sent terrible troubles upon the Egyp-



GATHERING MANNA.

tians, because the king would not obey him. But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and still he refused to let the Israelites go. So God sent thunder and

lightning and hailstorms to destroy the Egyptians' corn and fruit; and their grass and every green thing was eaten by locusts, and their cattle died, and they themselves had sores and sicknesses.

And at last Pharaoh's servants said to him, "Do as the Lord God commands you: let the Israelites go, or we shall all be dead men."

But even then Pharaoh would not obey God.

At last God said to Moses, "I will bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and after that he will let you go."

And so one night the eldest son in every family of the Egyptians died, from the eldest son of Pharaoh the king to the eldest son of the poorest of the Egyptians. And at midnight a great cry was heard throughout all the land of Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

Then Pharaoh rose up and sent hastily for Moses and Aaron; and he bade the Israelites take their cattle and their goods and be gone out of the land. And the Egyptians gave them presents and hurried them away.

So the Israelites went out by night from their homes in Egypt. And they gathered together at a place on the borders of the land; and then they all set out to go to that beautiful land that God had promised to bring them to. And God showed them



MOSES STRIKING THE ROCK.

the way to go, and he led them through the wilderness.

Now, a wilderness is a wild and lonely place,

where there is scarcely anything to be found to eat, and where in many parts there is no water. But God knows that men, women, and little children, and beasts also, must have food to eat and water to drink, or they will die. So he sent them food from heaven. They used to find this food in the morning lying upon the ground round about the place where they had stopped for the night. It looked like hoar-frost upon the ground, and the people called it manna. And every morning each family gathered as much of it as they wanted for the day.

After that they came to a dry, hot place, where there was no water. And the people complained bitterly. And they got angry with Moses, for they said that he had brought them out from their homes in Egypt to die of thirst in that dry and scorching wilderness.

But Moses in his trouble cried to God and said, "What shall I do? The people are almost ready to kill me."

And God said, "Take your staff in your hand, and strike with your staff upon the rock in Mount Horeb, and water shall come out of the rock, that the people may drink." And Moses did so, and water came out of the rock abundantly,—enough for the people and all their cattle.



MOSES RECEIVING THE TABLES OF THE LAW.

You see the Israelites were very ignorant, and God was teaching them by degrees how great he is and how good; but they were slow to learn, and

often they would not trust God, and sometimes they dared to disobey him, and then God taught them by terrible punishments.

When they had been three months in the wilderness they came to a mountain called Mount Sinai. Here God told Moses that he was now going to give his people laws, which they must always obey. And he commanded that they should prepare themselves, and behave in a very reverent and solemn manner, because they should hear the voice of God speaking to them from the mountain. They should not see him, for man cannot see God. And they must not come near to the mountain, nor touch it, but must stand far off and listen to the voice of God giving them commandments; only Moses and Aaron might come near.

So the people prepared themselves; and they stood at the foot of the mountain. And there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and the sound of a trumpet loud and terrible, so that all the people trembled. And thick smoke rose up from the mountain, for fire came down upon it; and the mountain shook and trembled. And the voice of God was heard out of the midst of the fire and the cloud and the thick darkness, giving commandments to his people.

And the people trembled and were afraid. And



MOSES BEHOLDING THE IDOLATRY OF THE PEOPLE.

they said to Moses, " Let God speak to you, and you shall tell his laws to us ; but let us not hear the voice of God any more, for this is awful and terrible ; we cannot bear it."

Then Moses said, "This is to teach you to fear God, that you may obey him for ever."

After that God spoke no more to all the people; but he called Moses up into the mountain and gave him laws for the people. And Moses was in the mountain forty days and forty nights. And God gave to Moses his commandments, written upon two tables of stone.

But when so many days passed and Moses did not come back to the people, they grew impatient, and they said to Aaron, "We know not what is become of this Moses, and we will not worship God any more: make us images, and we will worship them, and we will call them our gods, and we will go up with them into the land of Canaan."

Then Aaron dared to make a golden calf for the people to worship, though God had commanded them from the mountain that they should never make an image, to bow down before it and worship it. And the people made a great feast in honour of the calf, and they feasted, and sang, and danced before it.

But Moses was coming down from the mountain with the tables of stone in his hand; and he heard the noise of singing and feasting. And when he came near and saw how the people had sinned, he

cast out of his hands the two tables of stone on which the holy commandments of God were written, and broke them beneath the mountain, for he feared that God would now destroy all the people. Then he went down to the people, and he broke in pieces the golden calf that they had made. And many of the people died there because of that sin. But Moses prayed to God for the people; and God forgave them, and took care of them again, and showed them the way to go.

When they had been a year on their journey they came to the borders of Canaan; and they might have gone in then to that beautiful land, but they were afraid of the people who lived in it. They had not yet learned to trust God or to believe that he would really do as he had promised, and give them the land for their own. Therefore God sent them back again into the weary wilderness, to wander there for forty years, until they should learn to obey him and to believe his word. And all that time he taught them and took care of them; and Moses led them and spoke God's words to them. Many times they sinned and brought upon themselves bitter trouble; and many times God forgave them, when his servant Moses prayed for them. And at the end of forty years they came again to Canaan.

Now at last they had learned to trust God and to obey him, and now they might go in and take possession of the promised land.

But Moses was not to go with them into Canaan. He was now a very old man, and though his eye was not dim, and he had not grown feeble, yet the time was come for him to die. So he blessed the people and spoke many beautiful words to them. And when he had thus taken leave of them, he went up into a mountain, from which he could see all that beautiful land, to the borders of which he had led the people.

And Moses died peacefully there in the mountain ; and he went to be with God.

And all the people mourned for Moses, and wept for him ; for they had no other such teacher as Moses, to whom God spoke face to face.

But before he died Moses had told them that one day God would send into the world another and a greater Teacher, whom men must listen to and obey.

The Teacher he spoke of is our Lord Jesus Christ. Like Moses, he speaks God's words to men ; and, like Moses, he prays for them, and God forgives our sins for his sake. But Jesus pleads, not as Moses did, for one people only, but for all mankind.

THE STORY OF RUTH.



THERE was a man called Elimelech, who lived at Bethlehem in the land of Canaan. His wife's name was Naomi; and they had two sons, whose names were Mahlon and Chilion.

And when there was a famine in the land of Canaan, Elimelech and Naomi and their two sons left their home at Bethlehem, and went and stayed in the land of Moab, for there was plenty of food there.

Now Elimelech and his family were Israelites, and worshipped God; but the Moabites did not know anything about God, except when they learned from the Israelites to worship him. And therefore they made idols, which they called their gods; and they worshipped their idols, as all heathen people do.

Elimelech died in the land of Moab; and Mahlon and Chilion were married to Moabite women. The name of Chilion's wife was Orpah, and the name of Mahlon's wife was Ruth.

And after a while Mahlon and Chilion died also. So Naomi had no one left to her, her husband and her two sons being now dead.

And then, when she had heard that the famine was over in the land of Canaan—for God had given his people plenty of food once more—she left the place where she had been staying in Moab, and she set out to return to her old home at Bethlehem. And her two daughters-in-law—the women who had been married to Mahlon and Chilion—went with her part of the way.

And when they came to the borders of the land of Moab, Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, “Go now, return each of you to her mother’s house; and may God be kind to you, as you have been kind to me, and to your husbands who are dead. God grant that each of you may find a happy home in the house of another husband.” Then Naomi kissed her daughters-in-law and bade them good-bye.

But Orpah and Ruth cried when she said those words to them, and they answered, “We will go with you, and make our home among your people.”

But Naomi told them that she had no home for them any more, for she was old and would never marry another husband, and that she had no more



RUTH'S CONSTANCY TO NAOMI.

sons who could marry them and give them happy homes again; therefore it was better for them to return to their own parents.

Then Ruth and Orpah cried again, for they were grieved to hear Naomi speak so sadly. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, and bade her farewell and left her ; but Ruth went on with her still.

So Naomi said, "See, your sister-in-law is gone back to her people and to her gods ; do you go back too after your sister-in-law."

But Ruth answered, "Ask me no more to leave you, or to return from following after you : where you go, I will go ; where you stay, I will stay ; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I too will die, and there will I be buried ; for only death shall now part you and me."

For Ruth loved Naomi, and she did not want ever to worship idols any more ; for she had learned from her husband and from Naomi to love and trust God, and to worship him only.

When Naomi saw that Ruth's mind was quite made up to stay with her, she did not tell her any more to go back.

So they went on together, and at last they came to Bethlehem.

And when Naomi's old neighbours saw her returning to her old home, they said, "Is this Naomi?"

Now the name "Naomi" means *pleasant*, and this

poor, lonely widow, whose heart was so sad, thought that Pleasant was no longer a fit name for her, so she answered, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara; for God has sent very bitter sorrows to me. I went out full, and the Lord has brought me home empty. Why then do you call me Naomi, when such bitter troubles have befallen me?" (For the name "Mara" means *bitter*, and the widow thought that name would be fitter for her now.)

So Naomi and Ruth lived alone at Bethlehem.

It was early in the harvest-time when they came there, and people were beginning to reap their barley. Now one of the kind laws which God had given to the Israelites was, that when people reaped their corn and bound it in sheaves, they should not carefully gather up *all* the ears of corn from the ground, but those ears which the binders had passed over at first should be left on the ground, that poor people might gather them up and keep them for themselves. And so people who had no corn-fields of their own could get a little corn in this way. And when rich people gathered in their fruit, they must leave some of that also for the poor to glean.

Now Ruth and Naomi were poor, and had no corn of their own; for all this while there had been no one to till Elimelech's fields at Bethlehem. So Ruth

said to her mother-in-law, "Let me now go into the corn-fields and glean ears of corn in the field of some one who shall be kind to me."

And Naomi answered, "Go, my daughter."

So Ruth went out into the corn-fields. And when she came to a field in which there were some men reaping barley, she said, "I pray you let me glean after the reapers in this field."

And they gave her leave to glean there.

This field of barley belonged to a rich and honourable and good man named Boaz. Now Boaz was the cousin of Ruth's husband, who was dead, but Ruth did not know that he was related to the family.

By-and-by Boaz came out into his field; and he saluted his reapers very kindly. And he saw Ruth gleaning among the sheaves, and he knew that she was a stranger. So when she had gone away to rest herself for a little while in the shed in which the reapers used to get shelter from the hot sun at mid-day, Boaz said to his servant, "Who is this young woman who is gleaning here to-day?"

And the servant answered, "That is the young woman who came back with Naomi out of the land of Moab. She asked leave to glean in our field, and she has been following our reapers since the morning until now."



RUTH GLEANING IN THE FIELDS OF BOAZ.

Now Boaz had heard the story of Naomi's kind and dutiful daughter-in-law, and he was pleased that she had come to glean in his field. So he went to

Ruth and said to her, "Do you hear, my daughter? You shall glean in my fields all through the harvest. Do not go away into any other field, but keep close by my reapers; for I have charged them to be kind to you: no one will be rude to you as long as you stay here; and when you are thirsty you may go and drink some of the water that my reapers have drawn for themselves."

Then Ruth bowed down before this honourable and good man to thank him, and she said, "How is it that you are so kind to me, seeing I am a stranger?"

Boaz replied, "I have been told how loving and dutiful you have been to your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your own relations and the land where you were born, and have come to dwell among people who are strangers to you. May a full reward be given to you by the Lord our God, in whom you have learned to trust."

Then Ruth was glad, and she said, "You are very good to me, my lord; for you have comforted me, and spoken friendly to me, though I am a stranger, and not like the women of this country."

And Boaz said, "At meal-time you must come and eat and drink with us."

So at meal-time Ruth came and sat down beside

the reapers. And Boaz gave her parched corn and bread—more than she could eat ; so she kept some of it to bring home to Naomi.

And when she had risen to glean, Boaz bade his reapers let some of the ears of corn fall on purpose for Ruth to gather them, and let her take as much as she could gather.

So she gleaned in the field until the evening. And when she beat out the grain from the ears which she had gathered, there was as much corn as she and Naomi could eat for several days.

Then she took up the corn, and went home and told her mother-in-law all that had happened. And she gave her the bread and parched corn which she had left after her own dinner.

But when she said, “The name of the man who has been so kind to me is Boaz,” then Naomi knew that it was her husband’s cousin.

And she said, “May God bless him who shows such kindness to you and me for the sake of his relations who are dead. The man is a near relation of ours—one of the nearest we have.”

And when Ruth told her that he wished her to glean in his fields all through the harvest, Naomi said, “That is well, my daughter ; do not go into any other field.”

So Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz all through the harvest, until the barley and the wheat were all reaped. And every night she went home to her mother-in-law.

Now when Elimelech, Naomi's husband, lived at Bethlehem, he had fields of his own there ; and when Naomi returned to her old home these fields were hers. But she had no one now to till them, and very likely she had no money to buy corn-seed to sow in them or to pay people to work in them, and so she wished to sell them.

The Israelites had a law which said that when any piece of ground was to be sold, the nearest relation of the man to whom it had belonged ought to buy it : but if he refused to do so, it was offered to the next nearest relation ; and he had to call together all the chief men of the place where he lived, that they might see how the nearest relation had refused to buy the ground, and that he now had the right to buy. But according to another law which the Israelites had, the man who should buy Elimelech's ground should also marry Ruth.

Naomi wished greatly that she might sell her fields to Boaz, and at the same time give him Ruth to be his wife, because he was such a good, kind man,—she knew he would make her very happy. So she sent



RUTH RECEIVING THE MEASURES OF BARLEY.

Ruth to tell him that she was going to sell the ground.

Boaz would have liked very much to marry Ruth,

for he had seen how sweet and good she was, and he loved her ; but he knew that there was another man in Bethlehem who was a nearer relation to Elimelech, and who therefore must first be asked if he would like to buy the ground and to have Ruth for his wife.

So he said to her, "The Lord bless you, my daughter ; for you have indeed been good and kind, and all the people in Bethlehem know that you are a good woman. And it is true that I am a near relation to your dead husband, but there is one who is nearer yet. I will go and see him, and ask him whether he wishes to buy Naomi's fields. If he wishes to buy them, then he has the right to do so ; but if he refuse, then I will buy them, and you shall be my wife."

Then he gave Ruth six measures of barley. So she held out her mantle, and he poured the barley into it,—as much as she could carry. And he laid it on her, and sent her home to Naomi ; and he himself went down into the city of Bethlehem.

When Ruth came to her home it was still early in the morning. And Naomi hastened to let her in and to ask her what Boaz had said. So Ruth told her every word, and how he had given her all that barley.

Then said Naomi, "Be at rest, my daughter ; for



BOAZ PURCHASING THE INHERITANCE OF ELIMELECH.

the man will not be satisfied until he knows whether he may have you for his wife."

Now Boaz had gone down into Bethlehem, and

there he sat in the gate of the city until the man came by whom he wished to speak with. And he called him ; and the man came and sat down beside Boaz in the gate. Then he called for ten of the chief men of the city, and they also came and sat down in the gate.

And when they were all there Boaz told his business, and he asked the other man whether he would like to buy Naomi's fields.

And the man said, " I will buy them."

Then Boaz said, " He who buys this ground must also marry Ruth, the Moabite woman, who was the wife of Naomi's son."

But the other man did not want to marry Ruth, so he said, " Buy the fields for yourself ; I give up my right to you."

So he plucked off his shoe and gave it to Boaz ; for that was a sign that he gave up to him his right to buy the fields.

So Boaz bought the fields. And Ruth became his wife, and then she had her home in his house.

And the people of Bethlehem gave them kind wishes ; for both Boaz and Ruth were greatly honoured in the place where they lived.

And Boaz and Ruth had a son, who was called Obed, which means a *restorer* ; for the women of



NAOMI NURSING RUTH'S SON.

Bethlehem said to Naomi, "This little child shall be a restorer of your life and a nourisher of your old age; for he is the child of Ruth your daughter-in-

law, who loves you, and who is better to you than seven sons."

And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom and nursed it; and she was comforted at last for the sons she had lost.

And this little child grew up; and his name too is honoured to this day, for he was the grandfather of the great and good David who afterwards became King of the Israelites.

So Ruth the Moabitess, who was born in a heathen land, and who in her youth was taught to worship idols, was loved and honoured among God's people; because when she heard of God she loved him and resolved to serve him, and she was dutiful and good and kind.

Thus God blesses those sons and daughters who honour their parents; and it is such sons and daughters who make parents glad and happy, even in their old age. The Bible says that "a wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." And this is just as true of daughters as it is of sons.

THE STORY OF DAVID.



THERE was once a shepherd boy whose name was David. He was one of eight brothers, the sons of a man called Jesse, who lived in Bethlehem, in the land of Canaan. David was Jesse's youngest son, and he kept his father's sheep. He was a brave, noble youth, who loved God and feared nothing in the world; for he knew that God was everywhere.

And so one day, when a lion came and took away a lamb out of his flock, David was not afraid to follow the lion; and he struck him and killed him, and saved the lamb out of his very jaws. He also killed a bear; for God was with him, and gave him strength to overcome these savage beasts.

David's mind was full of beautiful and happy thoughts, and he used to turn these thoughts into sweet psalms, which are written in the Bible. He believed that God was watching him and taking care

of him, just as he watched and tended his sheep, and therefore he sang, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want," and the rest of that beautiful psalm, which I am sure you have often heard.

The king of the country where David lived was a man called Saul. He was the king of the Israelites. He was a tall, strong man, and a good soldier; but he had disobeyed God, and therefore he was no longer fit to be king over God's people.

The old prophet Samuel was very sorry for Saul, because he had been bad, and because he might not continue to be king. For God had told his prophet that he would choose another king,—a man who should do his will.

And God said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul? He is not to continue to be king. Go to the house of Jesse at Bethlehem; for I have chosen a king among his sons, and you shall anoint the man whom I have chosen to be king."

So Samuel filled a horn with oil; for he must pour oil upon the head of the man who was chosen to be king. And he went to Bethlehem, and sent for Jesse and his sons.

And when they were come, Samuel looked at the eldest son, and he said in his mind, "Surely this is the man whom God has chosen to be king."



DAVID AS A SHEPHERD.

But God answered his thoughts, and said to him into his mind, "Do not regard his beautiful face or his noble height; I have not chosen him. For the

Lord sees not as man sees ; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

Then Jesse brought his second son to Samuel ; but Samuel knew that God had not chosen him either. And when seven sons of Jesse had passed before the old prophet, he knew that he had not yet seen the one whom God had chosen to be king. So he said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?"

And Jesse replied, "There is one more, the youngest ; he is keeping the sheep."

Then Samuel bade them fetch this youngest son.

And Jesse sent for David, and brought him to Samuel,—a beautiful young lad, with a fresh, pleasant face, and a bright colour.

And God said to Samuel, "Anoint him, for this is he." So Samuel poured the oil on the head of David.

After that David went back to his sheep again ; for though he had been anointed, he was not to be king for a long time yet.

But while David, with his mind full of happy thoughts about God, was tending his sheep, King Saul in his grand house grew fearful and gloomy and sad ; for an evil spirit troubled him.

And some of his servants said to him, "Let us



SAMUEL ANOINTING DAVID.

seek a man who can play well upon the harp, and bring him here to play for you, and the music will do you good."

Then another said, "There is a son of Jesse at Bethlehem who plays on the harp very beautifully; and he is wise and good, and the Lord is with him."

So Saul sent messengers to Jesse, saying, "Send me David your son, who is with the sheep."

Therefore David left his sheep and came to Saul. And when he played sweet music upon his harp the king was refreshed and was well for that time. And David went back to his sheep again.

There were people called the Philistines, who were a great trouble to the Israelites; for they used to come and fight battles with them, and rob them and take away their cattle and their goods. There had been war for a long time between the Philistines and the Israelites; and sometimes the Philistines got the victory, and then they were sure to ill-treat the Israelites and make them very miserable indeed.

Now King Saul and all the Israelites worshipped God, but the Philistines worshipped idols.

These Philistines gathered a great army and came into the Israelites' country, and there they set up their tents on the side of a hill. So King Saul gathered an army to fight them. And Saul's soldiers set up their tents on the side of another hill, facing the Philistines; and there was a valley between them.



DAVID PLAYING BEFORE SAUL.

But the two armies had not yet begun to fight. For every day a very tall and powerful man—a giant, whose name was Goliath—came and stood in the

front of the Philistines' army on the hill, and called out in a loud voice to Saul's army, "I am a Philistine, and you are the servants of Saul. Choose a man from among you, and let him come down and fight with me in the valley. If he is able to fight with me and to kill me, then we shall be your servants; but if I kill him, then you shall be our servants."

Saul and all his army were troubled and greatly afraid when they heard these words; for Goliath was a giant, all clothed in armour of brass, which neither sword nor spear could pierce; and he wore a huge helmet of brass upon his head, and carried a spear which no one else could lift, and his sword was too large and heavy to be used in battle by any hand but his own; and a man carrying a shield went before him. There was not one in all the army of the Israelites who could attempt to fight with this huge Philistine; so every day for forty days he called out, "Give me a man, that we may fight together!" and as yet no one had dared to answer him.

Now three of David's brothers were soldiers in Saul's army; but David himself remained at Bethlehem, keeping his father's sheep. One day his father said to him, "Go to the camp and see how your brothers are getting on, and carry with you some bread and parched corn and cheeses for the soldiers to eat."



GOLIATH DEFYING THE ISRAELITES.

So David left his sheep and set out for the place where the army was encamped. And he went in among the soldiers to see his brothers. And while

he was talking with them Goliath came out upon the hill opposite, and called for a man to come and fight with him.

And David said to the men who were near him, "Who is this heathen Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

And the men told him how King Saul had promised rewards and great honours to any one who should fight with the giant and overcome him, but that there was no soldier in all the army who could dare to do it.

When David's eldest brother heard him speaking in this way about the giant he got angry, and he said to him, "What business have you to come here at all? You should have stayed with your sheep. I know why you have come here: you want to see the battle."

But when the brave words of young David were told to King Saul, he desired that the lad should be brought to him; so they brought him in before the king.

And David said, "Let no man's heart fail because of this Philistine; I will fight with him."

But Saul said, "You are not able to fight with this Philistine; for you are but a youth, and he has been fighting battles for many years."



GOLIATH OVERCOME.

Then David told the king how, when he kept his father's sheep, he had killed a lion and a bear; and he said, "The Lord, who saved me out of the paw

of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will also save me out of the hand of this Philistine."

When Saul heard this he said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you." And he gave him his own armour, and put a helmet of brass on his head, and gave him a sword to use in the battle.

But when David had put them on he found that he could not go out with Saul's sword and armour, for they were too heavy for him; so he said, "I cannot go with these, for I have never worn such things before, and I know not how to use them."

So he put off Saul's armour and went out with his shepherd's staff and his sling, and he had a bag fastened at his side, as shepherds used to have. And he chose five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in his bag, and went to meet Goliath the Philistine.

And Goliath came on to meet David; but when he saw the young lad who was come to fight with him—and not so much as a sword in his hand—he mocked and said, "Am I a dog, that you should come to me with a staff? Come along; I will soon kill you, and the wild beasts and the birds shall eat you."

But David answered, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear; but I come to you in the

name of the Lord, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied: this day will God give you up into my hand. And all these people shall know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands."

So Goliath came on, and David ran to meet him. And as he ran he drew a stone from his bag and put it in the sling. And he shot it out from the sling, and it struck the giant and sank into his forehead, so that he fell upon his face to the ground. And David ran and stood upon the giant, and drew the great sword that was by the giant's side, and cut off his head. So David overcame the giant with a sling and with a stone.

And when the Philistines saw that their great soldier was dead, they ran away in great confusion, leaving their tents and their goods behind them. And the Israelites shouted and ran after the Philistines, and drove them back to their own country.

But David was brought in before King Saul, holding the head of Goliath in his hand. And the king gave David great honours, and made him a captain in the army, and would not let him go back to be a shepherd again.

Now Jonathan, Saul's son, was standing by when

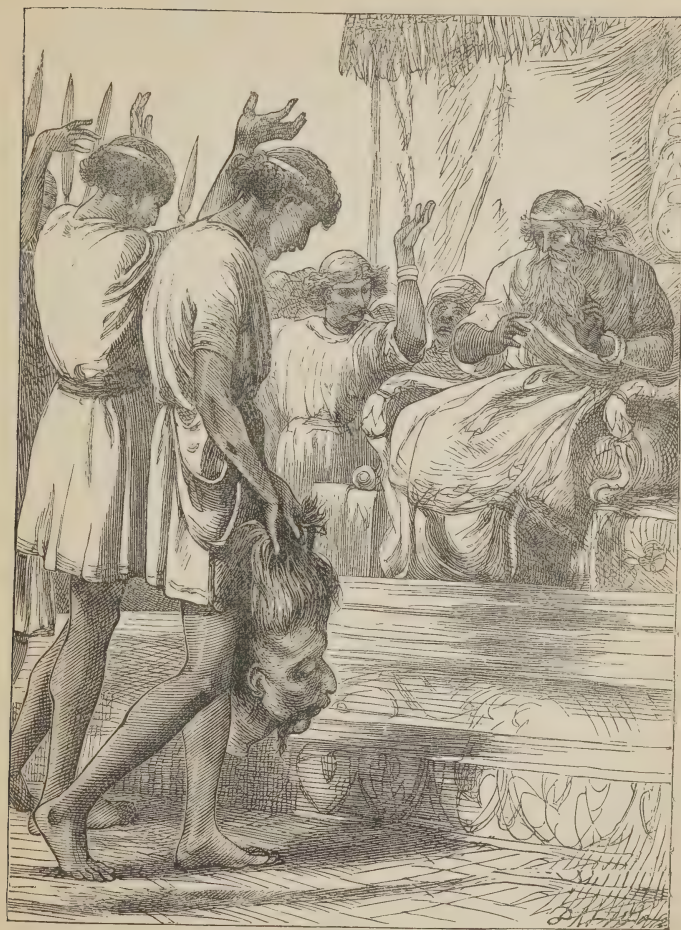
his father was speaking to David. And the king's son loved the noble shepherd boy ; and the two became such friends that people often say of friends who love each other very dearly, "They are like David and Jonathan."

And David behaved himself wisely in all that the king gave him to do ; and the people loved him, because he was a brave captain, as he had been a brave shepherd. And he prospered in all that he did ; for he trusted in God, and God blessed him.

When King Saul was returning to his home in triumph, the people came out to meet him, rejoicing that the fierce Philistines had been driven from the land. And for joy the women sang songs and played on timbrels, and danced in time to the music as they sang. But in their songs they praised David more than they praised Saul ; therefore Saul became envious of David, and hated him from that day forward.

The next day, as David was playing the harp before the king,—for again the evil spirit troubled him,—Saul cast a javelin at David, thinking to kill him ; but David avoided the javelin and escaped.

Then Saul sent him to fight the Philistines again, for he hoped he might be killed in battle ; but David returned in triumph, and the people loved and praised him more than ever. So Saul became very



DAVID WITH GOLIATH'S HEAD BEFORE SAUL.

angry and jealous, for he believed that the people wanted to have David for their king.

At last David had to run away and hide himself

in a wild, lonely place, for he saw that Saul was determined to kill him. And there many of his friends came to him and stayed with him. Saul used to go out with men to seek for them, and he hunted them from place to place; but though David and his friends were brave and strong soldiers, yet David would never fight with King Saul. He said he would never lift his hand to hurt the man whom God had made his king.

David knew well that some day he himself should be king, for God had chosen him. But he did not want to take the kingdom for himself,—he would wait until God gave it to him. Jonathan, Saul's son, also knew that David would yet be king; but he was not angry or jealous, for he loved David as his own soul. He used sometimes to come to him and comfort and encourage him.

At last one day a messenger came and told David that Saul and his sons had been killed in a battle. And David mourned for Saul and his sons, especially for his dear and true friend Jonathan.

Then the people made David king; for they loved him, and they had no one else who was such a brave soldier, and who would drive their enemies from the land, so that they might live in peace.

For a long time after that King David had battles



JOY ON THE ARK'S RESTORATION.

to fight. But he trusted in God and believed his promises, and in the end God gave him rest from all his enemies.

Now the Israelites had many beautiful things which used to be kept in a tabernacle—that is, a kind of tent where they used to go to say their prayers and to worship God, as we do in church. One of these sacred things was a beautiful golden ark, which was called the Ark of God. When King David had rest from his enemies, he had all these things brought up to Jerusalem, where he lived, so that they might be always near him,—his great wish was to build a very beautiful house to keep them in.

So the ark of God and all the other sacred things were brought up to Jerusalem with joy and with shouting and with sounding of trumpets. And King David himself danced before the ark for very gladness; for David's greatest joy was to worship God and to praise him.

When his wars were over, and his enemies troubled him no more, he made a beautiful psalm of thanksgiving, which begins, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust."

At last King David died, in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour.

THE STORY OF DANIEL.

DANIEL was a Jewish boy. He lived a long time ago in the city of Jerusalem. And whilst he was still quite young, a great king, whose name was Nebuchadnezzar, came from Babylon, and made war upon the Jewish king, and took him prisoner, and carried him off to Babylon. He also took many golden vessels out of the temple of God ; besides men, women, and children.

One of these children was Daniel ; and there were three other boys—his friends—named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. And Nebuchadnezzar gave orders that these boys, with many others, should be well fed and taught. For three years they were to be fed on the same meat and wine as the king himself had, that they might grow strong and handsome, and go to live, when they were old enough, in the king's palace.

Now the people of this land were heathens ; they knew not God, but worshipped idols of wood and

stone. But Daniel had been taught in Jerusalem to love and serve the true God; and he made up his mind to try and serve God still, and have nothing to do with the customs of the heathen.

So he begged Melzar, the officer who took care of him and his young friends, to let them live still upon herbs and water, as they had been used to do. And God put a tender love for Daniel into Melzar's heart, so that he let the boys try this simple food for ten days.

And at the end of the ten days they looked fatter and fairer than all the other children who had been fed on the king's meat and wine. Because God blessed them for trying to keep to their Jewish faith; and he gave them wisdom and power to learn all kinds of knowledge. And to Daniel God gave the skill to interpret or make out the meaning of dreams; for in those days God often showed men his truth and his will in dreams.

When the time was come for these four young men to go and live in the palace, the king talked with them himself; and he found them ten times wiser than all his other wise men, who had not been taught by God.

One night King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which troubled him very much, but on waking he



THE ASTROLOGERS FAIL TO DISCOVER THE KING'S DREAM.

could not recollect it; so he sent for all his wise men, and asked them to tell him his dream and what it meant.

But the wise men said they would tell him the meaning if he would tell them the dream. But this the king, who had forgotten his dream, could not do; yet he grew very angry with the wise men, and said if they did not tell him his dream he would have them cut to pieces! And when they still had no power to tell the dream, the king was furious, and orders were given to kill all the wise men of Babylon, Daniel and his friends amongst them. Daniel was sorry when he heard so many innocent men were to be killed, and he begged the king to wait a little while; and going to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, he told them what the king wanted, and begged them to join with him in praying to God to let him know what the dream and its meaning were, that their lives might be saved.

And in the night God told the secret to Daniel. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven, and asked Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, to take him in before King Nebuchadnezzar.

And Arioch did so, and Daniel told the king what his dream had been and what it meant.

Then the king, full of wonder and joy, fell down and worshipped Daniel, and made him a great man—governor over all the wise men of Babylon—and gave him rich presents. And because Daniel asked



DANIEL RECEIVES GIFTS FROM THE KING.

him, Nebuchadnezzar made Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego princes and governors.

After this Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image

of gold, a great tall idol. And a herald cried aloud to all the people that, when they heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, they were to fall down and worship the golden image; and if any one did not fall down and worship it, he was to be cast into a burning fiery furnace.

So all the people did as the king told them to do, except the Jews, who had been taught by God not to worship idols. And some one went to the king, and told him that the Jews Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, whom he had made princes, would not obey him.

Then Nebuchadnezzar, in his rage and fury, had Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego brought before him. And he asked them whether they would worship the golden image or not. "For if not," said this wicked king, "you shall be thrown into the burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"

Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego spoke boldly to the king, and said, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us out of the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, we will not worship the golden image."



SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO IN THE FIERY FURNACE.

Then Nebuchadnezzar, full of anger, gave orders that the furnace should be made seven times hotter than before, and that the strongest men in his army

should bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and throw them into the fire.

And this was done ; and so hot was the flame that it killed the strong men who threw them in.

And the three Jews fell down, bound, into the fire. And the king watched to see it all done, and as he looked he saw that they walked loose from their bonds in the fire ! Then Nebuchadnezzar, full of surprise, said, “ Did we not cast three men bound into the fire ? Behold, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire ; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”

And going nearer to the furnace, Nebuchadnezzar called out, “ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither.”

So they came out of the fiery furnace. And the fire had not done them the least harm, even their hair was not singed ; for God had sent his angel to take care of them and keep them safe.

Then Nebuchadnezzar blessed God, and gave orders that from that day no one should say any word against the God whom the Jews worshipped, and that if any one did he should be put to death. “ For,” said the king, “ there is no other God who can deliver in this manner.”



NEBUCHADNEZZAR COMMANDING DANIEL TO INTERPRET THE DREAM.

After this Nebuchadnezzar had another dream, and again he called Daniel to tell him the meaning of it.

And Daniel did so, and told the king that God

was not pleased with him, for he was very proud, and thought a great deal of himself.

And Daniel said this dream was sent to warn him, that he might repent and try to do better, to be humble, and to show mercy to the poor ; for if he did not change his way of life, great trouble would come upon him, and he would lose his kingdom. But the king did not take warning nor follow Daniel's advice. He was still proud of himself and his power. For a whole year time was given him to repent ; and then, while he was boasting of his riches and his power and his great city Babylon, the anger of God came upon him, and he lost his reason, and was driven out of his palace by his fellow-men.

And he was brought so low that like oxen he fed upon grass in the fields, his body was wet with the dew of heaven, his hair grew like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. But after a long time God gave him back his reason, and he was sorry for his pride and his sins ; and God forgave him and brought him back to his kingdom once more.

The name of Nebuchadnezzar's son was Belshazzar, and he reigned after his father in Babylon. One would have thought Belshazzar would have been afraid to be proud and wicked, when he saw how his father had been punished for such sins. But Bel-



THE WRITING ON THE WALL.

shazzar did not take warning, and still bowed down before idols.

One night he made a great feast, and he bade his

servants bring out the sacred golden vessels which Nebuchadnezzar, his father, had brought away out of the holy temple of Jerusalem, and fill them with wine.

And they did so ; and Belshazzar and his lords and princes drank out of them, and praised the heathen gods of wood and stone.

And whilst they were all thus making merry and sinning against God, they saw part of a man's hand come through the wall, and the fingers wrote some words upon the wall ; but no one could tell what words they were.

Then the king was very much afraid, and calling all his wise men, he said whoever should make out for him what was written should have a scarlet robe and a golden chain, and be made third ruler in the kingdom. But not one of the wise men could read the writing. Then the queen thought of Daniel, who was so wise in telling the meaning of dreams, and he was sent for to the banquet hall.

And Belshazzar told him if he could read and explain the writing on the wall, he should have a scarlet robe and a golden chain, and be made third ruler in the kingdom. But Daniel the Jew did not care for any such things as these, and told Belshazzar that he wanted no presents from him, but that he would explain the writing.



KING DARIUS SIGNS THE WRITING AND THE DECREE.

And he read the words to the king, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN." And Daniel told Belshazzar to remember how God had given great

honour and glory to Nebuchadnezzar his father, but because he was proud that glory was taken from him.

“And thou his son, O Belshazzar,” said Daniel, “hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this. So God has sent this part of a hand, and this writing was written. And it means that God is angry, and will take away thy kingdom and give it to the Medes and Persians.”

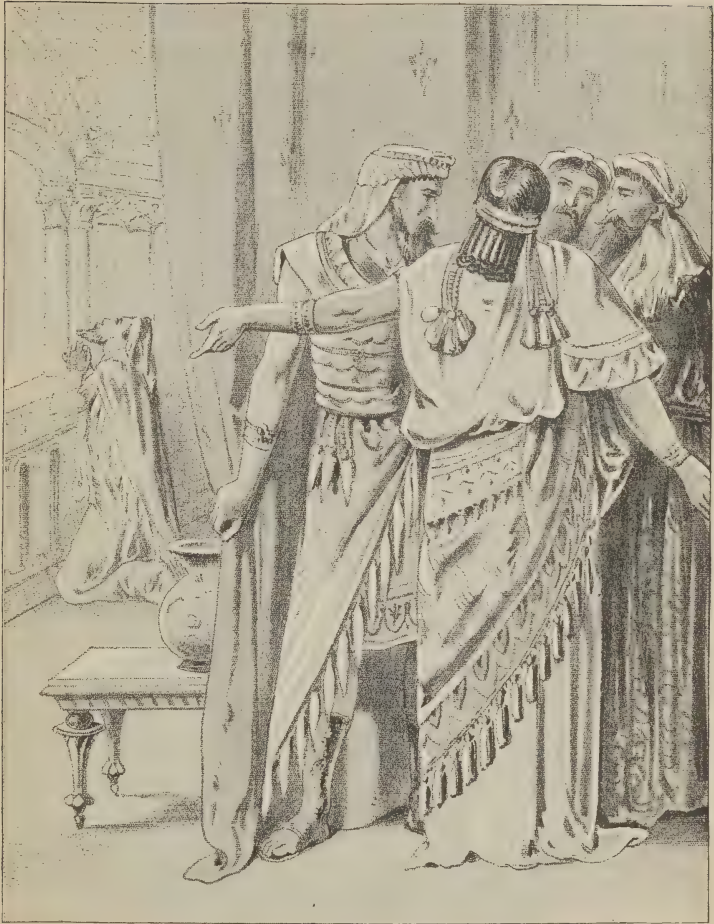
Then they clothed Daniel in scarlet, and put a chain of gold round his neck, and made him third ruler in the kingdom.

But that very night Belshazzar was killed, and Darius the Median took the kingdom.

Now it pleased Darius the king to set one hundred and twenty princes over the whole kingdom; and of these Daniel was made the first and greatest, because he was so wise and so good.

And the king would have liked to give him power over the whole land. But the other princes were jealous of Daniel when they saw how greatly King Darius loved him, and they tried hard to find some fault in him that might set the king against him.

They thought perhaps he might neglect some of his duties as a governor. But no; Daniel was faith-



THE PRINCES CONSPIRE AGAINST DANIEL.

ful to the trust the king had given him, and they could find no fault at all.

Then they said one to another, "We shall not be

able to find out any harm in Daniel, for he does all he has to do well ; but perhaps we can get him into trouble about his love for his God."

So they all met together, these wicked heathens, and they went to the king and said, " King Darius, live for ever. We have all agreed to ask you to make a royal law, that whoever shall ask any favour or make any prayer before any god or man for thirty days, except of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.

" Now, O king, make this law, and sign it, that it may not be changed ; like the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be altered."

And King Darius signed the writing, and made the law.

Now when Daniel knew that the law was signed, he went into his own house ; and the windows of his room being open towards his own dear city of Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had always done before. And this he did three times every day.

And the wicked men saw him praying before his God. So they went to the king and said, " Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man who shall ask a petition of any god or man, except of thee, O



DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN.

king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the den of lions?"

And the king said, "Yes, it is true. I did so;

and I made a law like that of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be changed."

Then the men were pleased, and they said to the king, "That Daniel, who was brought a captive out of Jerusalem, does not obey thee, O king: he does not care for the law which thou hast made, and every day, three times, he prays to his God."

When the king heard this he was very angry with himself to think that he should have been led to make such a law, and he made up his mind to do all he could to save Daniel from being thrown into the lions' den. All day long till it was sunset he tried to think what he could do, so that Daniel might not suffer; for Darius knew that Daniel had done no real wrong. But he was obliged to keep to the law.

So he sent for Daniel, and commanded that he should be cast into the den of lions.

But knowing all the time how good and holy Daniel was, Darius said to him, "Thy God whom thou servest always, he will deliver thee."

So Daniel was thrown into the den of lions; and a great stone was laid upon the mouth of the den, so that he might not be able to get out again.

And the king sealed the stone with his own signet or seal. But he was very sad, for he loved Daniel, his faithful servant; and when he went back to his



KING DARIUS TROUBLED ABOUT DANIEL.

own palace, he could not eat or drink, and he sent away the bands of music that at other times he liked to hear playing to him.

And when he went to bed he was unable to sleep.

All night King Darius lay awake, thinking of poor Daniel among the fierce hungry beasts ; and as soon as it was light, very early in the morning, he arose and went as fast as he could to the lions' den.

And with a sad voice he cried out to Daniel, " O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest always, able to deliver thee from the lions ? "

Then to his great joy he heard the voice of Daniel answer him from the lions' den.

And Daniel said, " O king, live for ever My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me ; because he knew that I had done no wrong ;—neither to thee, O king, have I been in fault "

Then King Darius was very glad indeed, and he made his servants take Daniel up out of the den.

And they did so ; and though Daniel had been all night alone in the den with the great lions, they had not touched him or done him the least harm, because he believed in his God.

Then the king told them to bring those wicked men who had spoken against Daniel, and to throw them into the den ; and not only those men, but their wives and their children.

And it was done. And the lions caught them and tore them to pieces, even before they got to the bottom of the den.

And King Darius wrote to all his people in all parts of his kingdom, and gave orders that every one was to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; for he only is the living God, whose kingdom is for ever. "He worketh signs and wonders," said King Darius, "in heaven and in earth, and he hath saved Daniel out of the lions' den."

So after this all went well with Daniel while Darius reigned, and after him, in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.



THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE SHEPHERDS.

THE LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

I AM now going to tell you about some one far more good and holy than anybody else who ever lived upon this earth. His name was Jesus Christ; and he was at the same time both God and man. For he was the Son of God, and his mother was a poor Jewish woman named Mary.

He was born more than eighteen hundred years ago. At that time Cæsar Augustus made a law

that everybody should be taxed. So Joseph, the husband of Mary, a poor carpenter of Nazareth, went up with her to the city of David, called Bethlehem, in Judea ; for he was of the family of David, the shepherd-king who wrote the Psalms so long ago.

Now so many people went up to Bethlehem that there was no room for Joseph and Mary in the inn ; and being weary and poor, they were glad to go into the stable and rest themselves after their journey. And in this stable Jesus Christ was born that night ; and Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger. She had no other bed or cradle in which to lay her little babe, although he was the Son of God.

Now there were some shepherds keeping watch over their flocks of sheep in the field that night. And as they watched, an angel came to them, and the glory of God shone round about them. And they were afraid ; but the angel told them not to fear. “ For,” said he, “ I bring you tidings of great joy for all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And you will find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” Then suddenly a number of other angels were to be seen

praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

And when the angels had gone back into heaven, the shepherds made haste, and went to see Jesus. And they found him as the angel had said, lying in a manger; and they worshipped him. And they told everybody what the angel had told them; and all wondered. But Mary kept all this in her heart and thought about it.

Now Herod was king of Judea in those days, and he was proud and cruel. And after Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Herod in Jerusalem, and said, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." When Herod the king heard these things, he was troubled. So he called the chief priests, and asked them where Christ was to be born.

Then the chief priests told Herod that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem. And Herod said to the wise men, "Go to Bethlehem, and when you have found Jesus let me know, that I also may go and worship him."

And the bright star that had led the wise men such a long way from the east to Jerusalem went



THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS.

before them and showed them where to go, till it stood still over the place where the young child was. And with great joy they went into the stable and

found Jesus there with Mary his mother. And falling down they worshipped him. And they gave him their best treasures, gold and spices.

But God warned them not to go again to Herod, who meant to kill Jesus, so they went back to their country another way. And when they were gone, God warned Joseph in a dream to take the young child and his mother out of Herod's way into Egypt, and stay there till he was told to bring them back. So Joseph got up at once and took Jesus and Mary away by night into Egypt.

Now when Herod found that the wise men did not come back to him, he was very angry. And he sent soldiers to kill all the little baby-boys in Bethlehem and round about. So he thought he should make sure that Jesus would be killed amongst them. And there was great sorrow, for many mothers lost their little ones.

When Herod was dead, Joseph brought Jesus and Mary back, and they settled in the city of Nazareth. And there Jesus lived with his mother and Joseph, who worked at his trade as a carpenter. And we are told that the child Jesus grew up, not only in his body, but in the grace of God, and that he was full of wisdom.

Now every year Joseph and Mary went up from



THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

Nazareth to Jerusalem to keep the feast of the Passover. This was and is still a great feast among the Jews. And when Jesus was twelve years old

they took him with them. And when they set out to return to Nazareth after the feast, Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. And they went on all day without missing him. But when night came on Mary looked for her dear son, and no one had seen him. Then, full of grief, they went back to Jerusalem, seeking for him everywhere. And for three whole days they looked in vain. At last, going into the temple, where the wise and learned men were together, they found Jesus amongst them, talking to them. And every one was full of wonder at the way in which he spoke. But his mother said, "Son, why hast thou left us? we have been very sad, looking for thee." And Jesus said, "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" And they did not understand what he meant; but Mary kept all his sayings in her heart. And Jesus went home with them, and was subject to them. That means, he always obeyed his parents.

When Jesus was about thirty years old he began to go about preaching to and teaching the people. And he chose twelve apostles to be with him and to go wherever he should send them to preach his word.

One day, walking from one place to another, he



THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

came to Jacob's well, near the city of Samaria. And being weary, he sat down to rest. And a woman coming to the well for water, Jesus asked her to

give him some to drink. And then he told her of the living water which he, as God, alone could give.

After this Jesus went in a ship on the sea, and his disciples were with him. And a great storm arose, so that the waves washed over the ship. But Jesus lay asleep. Then his disciples, being full of fear, woke Jesus, their Master, and said, "Lord, save us, we perish." Then rising up, he spoke to the winds and the sea; and they were still, and there was a great calm. And the men wondered, saying, "Who is this? for even the winds and the sea obey him."

Another time, as Jesus was going through a village called Bethany, a woman named Martha asked him to come and rest in her house. And Jesus went in; and Martha bustled about to prepare for him, so that she had no time to sit and hear his holy words. But her sister Mary sat at his feet on the ground, and listened to all he said. Then Martha begged Jesus to tell Mary to come and help her to cook and to serve the food. But Jesus told Martha she was too much taken up with cares about many things; that only one thing was really needful, and that was the good part which Mary had chosen, to sit still and hear his words.



CALMING THE STORM.

Now Martha and Mary had a brother named Lazarus, whom they loved very dearly, and once, when he fell ill, they sent to Jesus to tell him; for Jesus

loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus. But before Jesus got to Bethany Lazarus died and was buried; and he had been four days in the grave when Jesus came. And Martha went to meet him; but Mary sat still in the house till she heard that Jesus asked for her. Then she got up quickly and went out to him, and falling down at his feet, she said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." And when Jesus saw her and her sister and all the Jews (her friends) weeping with sorrow, he was troubled, and said, "Where have ye laid him?" And they said, "Lord, come and see." Then Jesus wept also. And they came to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Then Jesus said, "Take away the stone." So they took it away. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." And with a loud voice he cried, "Lazarus, come forth." And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, just as he had been buried. And Jesus said, "Loose him, and let him go." Then many of the Jews, when they saw the great power of Jesus, believed at once that he was the Son of God.

Now many mothers brought their little children to Jesus, that he might lay his holy hands upon them.



JESUS IN THE HOUSE OF MARTHA AND MARY.

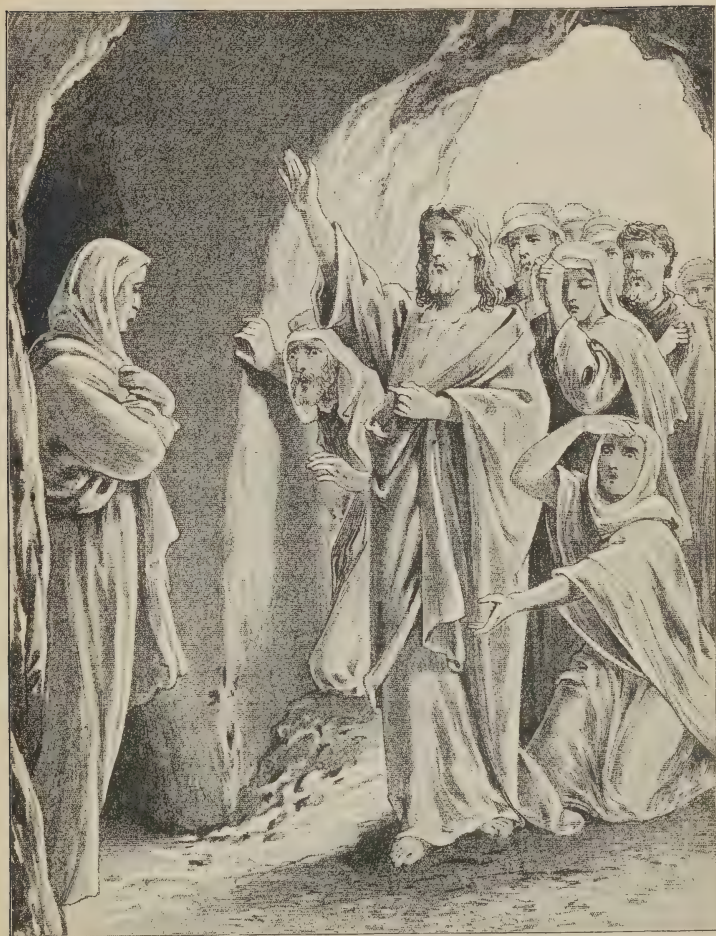
And the disciples were afraid they might trouble their Lord, and they were angry with those who brought them. But Jesus was not at all pleased

with his disciples for keeping the children away from him, and said, "Let the little children come unto me, and forbid them not." And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

In this little book I cannot tell you half of the wonders done by our Lord Jesus whilst he lived upon this earth. He cured sick people, whatever might be the matter with them. He made the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and, as you have heard, he raised the dead to life again. He went about doing good.

But many of the Jews and the chief priests were angry with him. They were jealous because so many people believed that he was in truth the Messiah, or Christ, as indeed he was, and they began to think of killing him.

Now Jesus knew this. But it was for this very purpose that he had come into the world,—to teach men the true love of God and of their neighbour, and to die himself that he might save them from the punishment of their sins. So he began to tell his disciples of his going up to Jerusalem, and of all that he was to suffer there. And he told two of them to go to a village close by and fetch an ass, which they would find tied there with her colt.



THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

And on this ass he rode into the city of Jerusalem, the people strewing palm-branches on the way. And coming near to the holy city, he wept over it,

because the people who lived there did not know him for their God, who alone could make them happy.

As the feast of the Passover drew near the chief priests thought more and more of killing Jesus.

Now one of the twelve apostles, named Judas, was very fond of money, and he was so unhappy as not to mind what he did if he could but grow rich. So he went to the chief priests when he saw they wanted to kill Jesus, and told them that if they would give him money he would betray his Lord and Master into their hands. And they gave him thirty pieces of silver.

Now Jesus, being God, knew all that was done. But having come on earth to die for our sins, he was willing to suffer whatever wicked men might do to him ; yet, being also man, having a body like ours, that could feel pain, the thought of all he would have to suffer made him very sad. And taking his disciples with him, he went to a garden called Gethsemane, where he kneeled down and prayed to God in an agony. But he said to his heavenly Father, "Not my will, but thine be done." And an angel came from heaven to strengthen him.

Now Judas knew this garden well, for Jesus had often been there before with his disciples. So he



THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

went there with a band of men and officers. And they took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away.

Then all his disciples forsook him and fled. And the wicked Jews took Jesus first to the high priest, and then before Pilate, the Roman governor and judge. And Jesus stood meekly before Pilate, whilst the Jews said all kinds of things that were not true against him. And at last they persuaded Pilate to condemn Jesus to death. But first they scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on his head. And they put on him a purple robe, and said, mocking him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him with their hands. And the chief priests cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him." So at last they led Jesus away to be crucified. Now this was a very dreadful death. People who were crucified were nailed by their hands and feet, while yet alive, to a wooden cross. To this death they put our blessed Lord. Nails were driven through his hands and his feet, and he hung for three hours upon the cross before he died.

And two thieves were crucified with him. One was a bad man; but the other was very sorry for all the wrong things he had done, and he asked our Lord to remember him when he should come again. And Jesus said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." And he prayed God to forgive those who had nailed him to the cross.

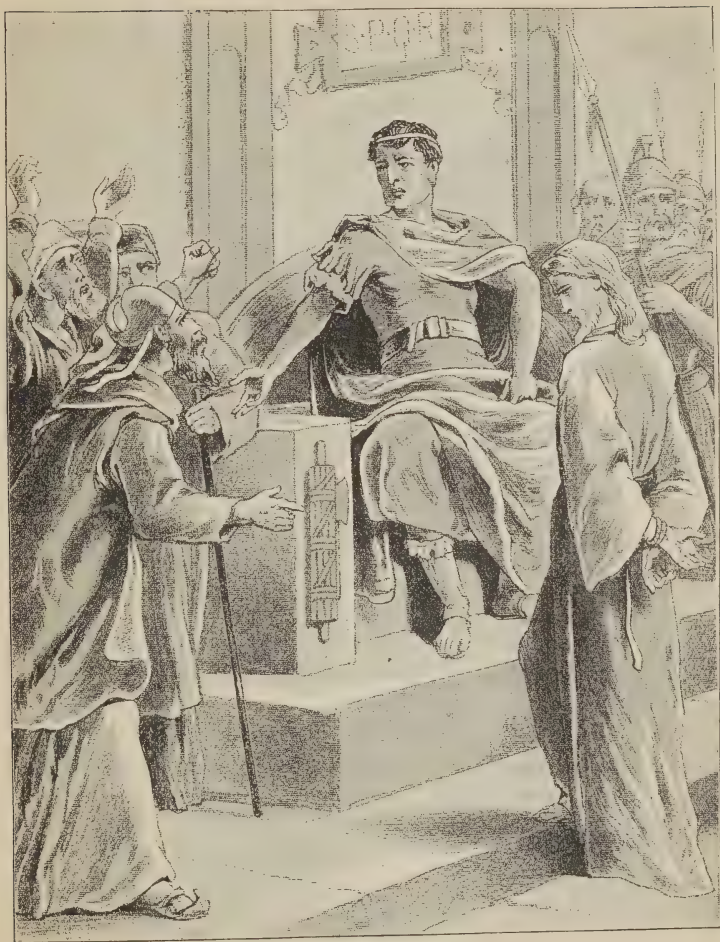


JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

Now the mother of Jesus stood by the cross and saw her dear son suffer and die, but she had no power to help him.

And when he was dead, Joseph of Arimathea, a counsellor, begged his body of Pilate, and laid it in a new tomb in a garden, and a great stone was rolled against the door of the tomb. This was on a Friday night. And very early in the morning of Sunday the disciples of Jesus and some holy women who loved him very much went to pay a visit to the tomb. And, behold, the stone was rolled away, and a bright angel sat there, who told them that Jesus was alive again—that he had risen up from death and the tomb, and that they should see him once more. Then they were full of wonder, but could scarcely believe what the angel said.

But that very day, as two of them were walking to a little village near, they met Jesus. At first they did not know it was he, and they told him, as a stranger, all that had been passing in Jerusalem, and of the crucifixion. Then Jesus explained and made clear to their minds all that the prophets had written about himself, and how it had been foretold that he should suffer and die, and then enter into glory. And they said to Jesus, “Stay with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.” So he went in, and sat at supper with them. And as he broke bread with them, all at once they knew him to be their dear Lord and Master. But he vanished



JESUS BEFORE PILATE.

out of their sight as soon as they knew him. Then with great joy they rose up from the table, and went back directly to Jerusalem and told the other

disciples, who were very glad. And whilst they talked together, Jesus himself came and stood in the midst of them. At first they were afraid, knowing that he had died and been buried. But he showed them his hands and his feet, that they might be sure, when they saw the print of the nails that had fastened him to the cross, that it was he himself. Then he ate some of a broiled fish and of a honey-comb with them.

Then he bade them stay in the city of Jerusalem until he sent power and blessing from heaven upon them ; because God had promised in a little while to send his Holy Spirit upon the disciples, to comfort them for the loss of their dear Master by the hope of seeing him soon again in heaven ; and to make them strong, that they might bear the sorrows and pains wicked men would give them ; and wise, that they might be able to teach others how to love and serve God and his dear Son Jesus.

Then he led them out as far as to the village of Bethany, and there he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And as he was blessing them he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven, and a cloud came and hid him from their sight. Full at once both of grief and joy, the disciples then fell down and worshipped their risen Lord. And going



JESUS AND THE TWO DISCIPLES AT EMMAUS.

back with great gladness to Jerusalem, they went into the temple, where they praised and blessed God.

And in ten days' time God sent his Holy Spirit, as he had promised to do, upon the disciples. And then they went about everywhere, as their dear Lord had told them to do, and preached the gospel to every creature.

THE END.

